

Applying to PEL

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is eligible to apply for membership in the Program for Emerging Leaders?

A: Applicants must be early to mid-career USG employees; they should be GS-09 through GS-13 civilians or O-3 through O-4 military or equivalent ranks **and** have at least three years of post-baccalaureate experience. Candidates must have a **SECRET** level security clearance. While a background in WMD is not required, applicants *must* have responsibilities related to national security, have leadership potential, and demonstrate an interest in WMD issues.

Q: Are government contractors eligible for membership?

A: No, membership is limited to early-to-mid career U.S. government employees.

Q: “Early to mid-career USG employees” is identified as GS-09 through GS-13 civilians or O-3 through O-4 military or equivalent ranks and at least three years post-baccalaureate experience. Will PEL consider applications from people who do not fall in this target range?

A: No, there are no exceptions to the eligibility criteria.

Q: The minimum membership requirements state that applicants must be early to mid-career USG employees, GS-9 through GS-13. I am mid-career (I have about 20 years to go before I retire), but I’m a GS-14. Might I still be eligible to apply?

A: At this time only GS-9 through GS-13 and O-3's and O-4's are eligible to apply. In the future we may reconsider these requirements to allow for a broader applicant pool, however at this time there are no exceptions.

Q: Will PEL consider applications from enlisted service members?

A: No, at this time PEL will only accept applications from O-3's and O-4's.

Q: Can I nominate more than one person for PEL?

A: Yes, there is no limit on how many nominations an individual or office can submit for PEL. However, in the past PEL has received many more nominations than there are available slots. Last year we received over 200 nominations from about 90 offices across government for approximately 25 slots. As a result, there is no guarantee that each nominating office will have even one candidate selected for PEL.

Q: Are PEL members required to relocate to Washington, DC?

A: No, only about 55% of PEL members currently reside in the National Capital Region.

Q: What is the time commitment for PEL?

A: The average time commitment for meetings is about two weeks for the first year of membership and one week for each subsequent year. Membership lasts three years. Participation in the one-week Summer Immersion (17-21 June 2013)

for first-year members is a non-negotiable requirement for membership. *If you are unable to commit to take part in Summer Immersion, you should not apply for PEL.* If you are accepted into PEL but are unable to make it for any reason to the Immersion, your membership is subject to revocation. All members are expected to attend the Winter Workshop each year of their three-year membership in the program. Members should also be able to make a good faith commitment to take part in other activities as responsibilities permit. The WMD Center reserves the right to revoke membership for failure to participate in PEL activities.

Q: Who is responsible for program-related expenses?

A: The WMD Center covers the costs of travel and lodging for trips associated with the program, including Summer Immersion and Winter Workshop. The cost to your organization is the time you will be out of the office for Summer Immersion, Winter Workshop, and any meetings or trips you are able to participate in.

Q: What kind of opportunities does PEL offer members?

A: PEL offers lectures and seminars with leading scholars and practitioners. Some of the leaders PEL members have met with include: former Secretary of Defense William Perry; former Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre; former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy; Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance and Acting Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller; Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs Madelyn Creedon; Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Andrew Weber;

Admiral James Loy, USCG (Ret.); former Assistant Vice Chief of Staff , Headquarters Air Force, Lt Gen Frank Klotz; CIA Associate Director for Military Affairs Lt Gen Welsh; Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation Vann Van Diepen; former Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Robert Joseph; former Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security Linton Brooks; former Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency Gregory Schulte.

The program also provides a unique opportunity for members to visit offices across government with responsibilities related to WMD and learn from today's leaders. Over the last five years, PEL members have visited the White House complex, CIA Headquarters, the Pentagon, the State Department, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Oak Ridge National Laboratory; the Defense Nuclear Weapons School, the Department of Health and Human Services, and Edgewood Chemical Biological Center.

Recently the PEL held its inaugural leadership dinner with the Honorable Michèle A. Flournoy, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. We look forward to holding more dinners with small groups of PEL members and civilian and military leaders in national security in the future.

Q: Do I need to have a background in WMD to become a member?

A: No, selection for membership in the program is based foremost on your potential for leadership in the U.S. government, although candidates must demonstrate an interest in WMD and explain why PEL would benefit their careers in their applications.

Q: Is there a model candidate for PEL?

A: No, there is no archetypal profile for membership in PEL. It is a program designed to benefit the U.S. government by bringing together people with diverse backgrounds and expertise who a high potential for leadership in the U.S. government and teaching them about WMD and related issues.

Q: Are there a specific number of slots allocated for services, departments, or agencies?

A: No, there are no slots allocated for the services, departments, or agencies. The number of applications we receive varies from year to year and has increased every year since the program's inception. The total number of applications the WMD Center receives does not equal the number of applicants who may who have applied within their organizations first and not been selected to be sent with their organization's endorsement to the WMD Center. (Not all organizations run their own internal selection processes before sending on candidates who have their endorsement and the WMD Center welcomes direct applications from eligible candidates.)

Q: Is there an additional service commitment for this program?

A: The WMD Center does not levy an additional service commitment for service members, if you are selected for and participate in the Program for Emerging Leaders. However, we try to identify and select those people who will go on to serve as senior leaders in their organizations and we are looking for people who are committed to a career in government service. It is possible that services or organizations that conduct internal selection processes before sending forward

applications for consideration to the WMD Center may choose to require additional time in service as a prerequisite for participating in the Program for Emerging Leaders.

Q: Can you offer guidance on the personal statement, specifically an appropriate length and preferred format that would be considered acceptable for my application?

A: Your personal statement may be up to 500 words and should be written in full paragraphs without bullets. Please explain how being a member of the Program for Emerging Leaders would benefit your career and discuss what you would bring to the program and your fellow members.

Q: Would a print out of my USAJobs.com resume be considered acceptable for the resume requirement of this package or would a business style resume be considered more appropriate?

A: No, we would like to receive a resume or CV which should be no more than two pages long.

Q: My most recent degree is from XYZ University. They will only mail transcripts and will not provide any type of unofficial transcripts. What should I do?

A: You should order an official transcript from the institution from which you received your most recent degree and include that transcript in your PDF application file.

Q: Is there a possibility of getting a waiver for the secret clearance requirement?

A: If you are applying to the Program for Emerging Leaders, you must have a SECRET clearance in time to attend Summer Immersion in June.

Q: I am very interested in this field of study, but would like to know if the program awards a master's degree since I have already completed one in a related field of study.

A: The Program for Emerging Leaders is not a degree-granting program; however, it is now possible to get graduate school credit through National Defense University, if you complete certain additional requirements (reading and writing assignments) and attend your Summer Immersion, all three Winter Workshops, additional trips, and meetings. For more information, please see the FAQs regarding the Certificate Program.

Q: The WMD Center has a Program for Emerging Leaders focusing on weapons of mass destruction. Are there other programs for future leaders which focus on other topics like counterintelligence or terrorism?

A: The WMD Center runs the Program for Emerging Leaders to focus on weapons of mass destruction, but it does not run any similar programs with other focuses. It is possible that other departments or agencies within the federal government may do so, but we are not aware of them.

Q: While the Program for Emerging Leaders is a three-year program, what exactly can be expected in terms of the work load and what do you mean by minimal impact on daily work schedule?

A: All PEL members are required to attend the Summer Immersion during the first year, are expected to attend their three Winter Workshops, and should participate in site visits and seminars as their schedules permit. PEL members are also expected to think of ways they can give back to the program, whether by hosting a site visit at their agency or planning a networking event. That being said there are no formal requirements that should impact a member's daily work schedule.

Q: When will you begin taking PEL applications for 2013?

A: Letters from the National Defense University's President inviting nominees to the program will be sent in November 2012. Shortly after that the application information will be posted on the Program for Emerging Leaders' website. If nothing is set up on the website by 1 December 2012, please contact the WMD Center, otherwise exercise patience.